

VZCZCXRO5384
RR RUEHLN RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHDBU #1612 3180421
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 140421Z NOV 07
FM AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1316
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
INFO RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 3225
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2050
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK NY
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC 0203

UNCLAS DUSHANBE 001612

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EEB/IFD/ODF;
STATE FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [KMCA](#) [MCC](#) [TI](#)

SUBJECT: MCC DEMARCHE - TAJIKS STILL MISSING THE POINT

REF: STATE 146777

¶1. (U) Summary. EmbOffs delivered the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) scorecard to a variety of Tajik officials, who roundly ignored its implications and instead attacked the legitimacy and methodology behind the indicators. Kyrgyzstan's pending Threshold Program caught the attention of several officials, but none was willing to engage in a discussion about steps Tajikistan might take in order to qualify for the program. End Summary.

¶2. (U) EmbOffs delivered the MCC scorecard and talking points to the State Committee on Investments and State Property, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economy and Trade, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Center for Strategic Studies. EmbOffs noted that the MCC criteria closely matched Tajikistan's own National Development Strategy and the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals. Tajikistan's ratings changed little from last year, reflecting the Tajik government's inability to implement key reforms and seriously address corruption.

¶3. (U) Despite Foreign Minister Zarifi's interest in the MCC program, nearly all the officials we met went on the defensive about MCC, drubbing the scorecard's independent methodology. EconOff referenced the 50-page MCC indicator description booklet frequently to fend off attacks. Several officials asked how Freedom House could analyze the country when they don't even have an office here. In a sad commentary on the state of Tajik academic rigor, Deputy Director Bobokalonov from the Center for Strategic Studies, a government run think tank, asked EconOff to explain what "healthy governance" means. EconOff responded that Tajikistan has many laws on its books, but lacks the capacity or political will to implement them. An official from the Ministry of Trade and Economy argued that Tajikistan "has very excellent political and civil rights," and that the researchers should come to the government to confirm their data. This official requested to meet with these organizations in order to explain the government's methodology. The official brushed off EconOff's suggestion that the government should instead meet with these organizations to figure out how Tajikistan might actually improve its indicators.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: As in past years' discussions regarding MCC, Tajik officials demonstrated that they were not interested in discussing meaningful reforms. They would welcome the additional assistance, but are not keen to do the heavy lifting necessary to bring about the necessary improvements in

governance. We will continue to use the MCC scorecard as an instrument to help prod Tajikistan to reform, but recognize that aid conditioned on policy reforms is a hard sell here. End Comment.

JACOBSON